



DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

Vol. 2, No. 11

Serving the men and women of Regional Command East, Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan

Dec. 10, 2005

ANA leads the way on patrol

By **Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke**
Editor

BAK, Afghanistan - Paratroopers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, and Afghan National Army Soldiers from the 3rd Company, 1st Kandak, conducted operations Nov. 23, in the Bak district in order to disrupt potential enemy movement through the border region.

The operation was ANA led and supported by the paratroopers from Task Force White Devil based out of Forward Operating Base Salerno.

The patrol was an exchange

See "ANA" page 9



Pfc. Michael Zuk

Afghan National Army Soldiers from 3 Co., 1st Kandak and Paratroopers from A Co., 2- 504 use a terrain model Nov. 23.

Combined arms rock Op Sorkh Khar

By **Sgt. Robert M. Storm**

2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment

JALALABAD, Afghanistan - Marines and Sailors of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, displayed effective use of "combined arms" during Operation Sorkh Khar in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan between the 12th and 22nd of Nov. in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During two separate attacks, Marines coordinated the use of air support, indirect fire (artillery & mortars), and light and heavy infantry weapons.

"When we reengaged the enemy the second time, we called in air support and artillery," said Capt. Casmer J. Ratkowiak, a forward air controller, with Company F, 2-3 Marines. "After that, we used an AC130 to engage with its 40 mm cannon and then we dropped two Joint Direct Attack Munitions (2000 lb. bombs)."

Combined arms is the art of using different types of weapons systems in conjunction with each other to put the enemy in a no win situation. In this example, the Marines responded with their direct fire weapons, while calling for indirect artillery fire on the enemy positions; forcing them to abandon their positions. At the

same time, if the enemy moves too much, he becomes visible from the air and vulnerable to their strikes.

The aircraft also destroy high value targets and soften the enemy positions to allow friendly forces to close on the enemy.

The enemy is not left with any solid options.

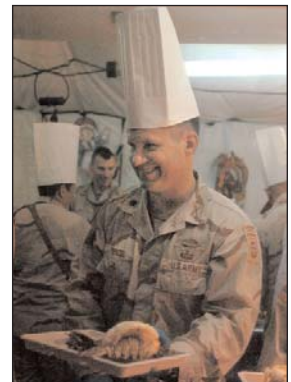
See "Marines" page 9



Sgt. Robert M. Storm

A Tube Launched, Optically Tracked, Wire Guided [Antitank Missile System] is fired during an attack by Co. F, 2-3 Marines in the Korengal Valley. The attack took place during Operation Sorkh Khar, Nov. 12-22.

Inside



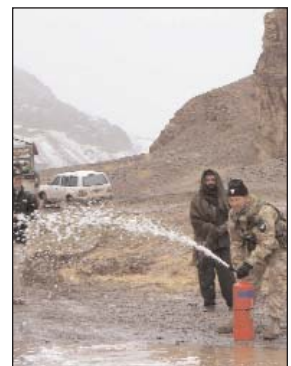
Troops feast, sing on Thanksgiving

Page 3



Guamanian drives everything

Page 4



Kiwis help clean up oil spill

Page 10

Opinion & Commentary

Page 2

Dec. 10, 2005

We're far from home, but still thankful

For most people, the holidays are a time of great joy and celebration. It's a time to spend with family and friends. But for servicemembers deployed overseas, this time of year is often spent far away from loved ones back in the States. These Servicemembers miss out on family traditions like gatherings, exchanging gifts, story telling and of course the meals.

The holiday season can intensify feelings of separation, especially for those younger servicemembers going through their first deployment.

Spc. Ashley Urquhart Bass is one of those Soldiers. She was raised in Houston and has been a Soldier for 19 months.

Bass wrote about her experience being away from home for Thanksgiving on her first deployment and some of the surprises she encountered along the way.

By Pfc. Ashley Urquhart Bass

Topographic Analyst
30th Engineer Battalion

I was raised in a big family so Thanksgiving is a huge tradition. That's how I know someone, somewhere in my family is cooking. It's always the night before that the major food gets cooked.

Well I won't be attending the grand dinner at a large table this year. Being over here is kind of upsetting but being around fellow Soldiers who have been through this before always helps.

The issue of morale seems to be the number one priority on holidays. All day I had been complaining about how the food was not going to be good and how disappointing it would be. To my surprise there was a line forming for food thirty minutes before the dining facility even

opened. I decided to wait about an hour before going to get something to let the line go down.

Hunger got me and about an hour later I was walking to the chow hall trying to get some food. There was still a line about fifty people long. I couldn't wait any longer; I had to stand in line.

As I was standing there, I saw two vehicles rush up and stop really close to the door. I didn't see who got out but I saw some guys with earpieces in their ear and I heard someone say something about a VIP.

In the back of my head I was thinking, "There's someone else that gets to cut the line." As the line moved, my battle buddy, Pfc. Alicia Bentley, and I just talked about the food we could be eating back at home.

We finally got in and there were officers and high ranking enlisted Soldiers serving us. Talk about a morale boost. As we got to the end of the serving line where they were handing out the sides, we got more than we expected. There stood Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan commander, serving us.

That was the first time in my military career seeing a general with that many stars. It was eye opening. The only thing I could say was, "Dressing please."

He was kind and gave me what I asked for and told me Happy Thanksgiving as he passed my plate down the line.

Further inside the chow hall was a sight for sore eyes. They had the place decked out. They had an ice sculpture shaped like a goblet with sparkling grape juices chilling inside it. An assortment of pies, jumbo cocktail shrimp and even a

selection of Baskin and Robin's ice cream were also there for us. That lay-out was also the first time I ever saw an ice sculpture.

The dining facility had decorated all the tables with festive place mats and table clothes and covered the tent walls with turkey cut-outs and paper Pilgrims.

At the end of my meal not only did my stomach feel full but my heart did too. I had gone into the chow hall depressed and came out rejuvenated.

Just knowing that the military cares about servicemembers and knows that the holidays are especially hard for us makes me excited to see what they have planned for Christmas. That feeling of support for me and the other soldiers goes a long way. I will always remember this day.

I may not have gotten to eat at the big family table at home, but I got to eat at a big family-like table with my fellow comrades who would put their lives on the line for me just like family would.

To all those families who have members that paid the ultimate sacrifice in combat, we are thankful not only this day but everyday for everything they did and the purpose they served. Happy Thanksgiving to all my fallen comrades, veterans, MIAs, POWs and their families.



Pfc. Ashley Bass

The Desert Devil Dispatch is an authorized newsletter for the personnel of Regional Command East, Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan. It is published in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.

The Desert Devil Dispatch is published bi-weekly by the Combined

Task Force Devil Public Affairs Office at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

Contents of the **Desert Devil Dispatch** are not necessarily the official view of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

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Troops give thanks, express themselves

By Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan—It is never easy for Soldiers to spend the holidays deployed away from their families, but the service members based at Forward Operating Base Salerno, home of Combined Task Force Devil, made the best of Thanksgiving this year.

Aside from a traditional Thanksgiving feast, troopers enjoyed a flag-football tournament and a talent show organized by the base's morale welfare and recreation noncommissioned officer, Sgt. Shane Duffy.

"We started planning for the events two months ago," Duffy said.

"Everything went real well," said Duffy. "We decided to have the talent show after the success of the first one."

"Today everyone has been coming up to me saying 'hey it was a great show,' we are planning another (talent show) for Valentine's Day," Duffy said.

Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Cynthia A. Pritchett, CFC-A command sergeant major, visited FOB Salerno to serve food to Soldiers along side officers from CTF Devil.

It is a long standing military



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

Warrant Officer Jose Ramirez, the property book officer with Headquarters & Company A, Logistical Task Force 307, 1st Lt. Sean Murphy, the Company B executive officer with LTF 307, and Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan commander, serve Thanksgiving Day lunch at the Forward Operating Base Salerno chow hall Nov. 24.

tradition for officers to serve holiday meals to their Soldiers.

Eikenberry and Pritchett also visited the Khowst and Gardez Provincial Reconstruction teams during their trip.

"Each and every day I get up and I am thankful to command such an elite group of Soldiers,"

Eikenberry said to troops during a stop in Gardez.

"There will come a day when a younger generation will be saying what a remarkable thing you have done here," Eikenberry said.

"This trip was important because it lets the troops know how the command feels about the job they are doing," Pritchett said.

As the sun set upon the base one couldn't help but notice the rich scent of cigar smoke in the air and the various circles of folding chairs with laughing groups of Soldiers enjoying a Thanksgiving with their "other" family; their military comrades.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

First Lt. Anthony Rob, the 2-504 Assistant S-4, "plays" a wooden violin prop during his group's exhibition performance at the FOB Salerno Thanksgiving Day talent show.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Spc. Grady Stiltner sings during the Forward Operating Base Salerno Thanksgiving Day talent show.

Guam 'Master Driver' proves to be valuable asset

By **Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige**
Task Force Devil Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Sgt. Jeffrey Santos of the 1224th Engineers, Guam National Guard, has a drivers license as long as your arm.

One look at his license will tell you that he either likes operating heavy equipment or is a big kid at heart with lots of big toys. Santos is based out of Forward Operation Base Salerno and shares his skills with all the units there.

As a Master Driver, Santos is qualified to operate more than 50 different types of vehicles, heavy equipment and machinery. He can also train and license personnel on each of those pieces.

Santos began his career in the Army National Guard 24 years ago, when the 1224th Engineers was first chartered on Guam. He's actually one of the founding members since he was the 7th soldier to join the unit.

During his career, he's traveled to and served in Korea three times, Japan, Australia, the Philippine Islands, Honduras twice, Tinian Island in the Marianas group in the Pacific and Minnesota.

In the 1224th, Santos has built barriers, excavated culverts and constructed roads. He thinks that serving in Afghanistan as a builder is worthwhile.

"This deployment is awesome, we've



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Sgt. Jeffrey Santos, a heavy equipment operator with the 1224th Engineer Detachment, Guam Army National Guard helps a host nation citizen maneuver a Dynapac mini bulldozer. Santos is qualified to operate and instruct on more than 50 different kinds of heavy equipment vehicles and machinery.

helped soldiers on the base and the local people," said Santos.

He's also glad to be past the halfway point of his deployment. He said that it's tough being away from home, but having the support of his wife Bing, and his three children, make it bearable.

His oldest son Zachary is a college student studying computer science. His younger son Jeffrey and daughter Alexis, have both joined the Army. Whether or not they will follow the exact footsteps of their

See "Santos" page 6

Marines celebrate Corps birthday in combat zone



Sgt. Robert M. Storm

Lt. Col. James Donnellan, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, cuts the Marine Corps birthday cake with a bayonet Nov. 10 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

By **Sgt. Robert M. Storm**
2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment

JALALABAD, Afghanistan - Marines and Sailors of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii celebrated the 230th Marine Corps birthday Nov. 10 during Operation Enduring Freedom VI in Afghanistan.

By tradition every year regardless of location, Marines observe the birthday by sharing a cake and a dinner. A bayonet or sword is used to cut the cake as a reminder that they are a band of warriors.

"What better way to commemorate the birthday of our Corps than to be deployed in harms way against the very people who conducted the attacks on 9/11," said Lt. Col. James Donnellan, Command-

ing Officer, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines. "On this day, while we have a tremendous history to look back on, we are living up to that history."

Although Task Force Koa in Regional Command East, Afghanistan, has members supporting it from all four services, Donnellan said to the assembled group, "Today is not about being 'purple' - it's about being a Marine; a 'soldier from the sea'; it's about the one who gets a chill up his spine when he sees the eagle, globe and anchor."

Despite their current location in Afghanistan, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines carried out the birthday celebration in accordance with the traditions observed throughout the world. Birthday messages were read from former Commandant Gen. John A. Lejeune and current

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael W. Hagee. The traditional cake cutting ceremony along with the presentation of the first pieces of cake to the oldest and youngest Marines present were also performed.

Upon conclusion of the ceremony, the Marines and sailors of 2/3 quickly turned their attention to the task of preparing for an upcoming mission.

"It's a time when young and old get together to celebrate tradition," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Gerardo V. Panetta, battalion operations chief. "It doesn't matter where we're at or what we're doing. We're Marines, and we celebrate that fact."

Traditionally, the celebration includes a ball, and even though the deployed setting wasn't as formal, the spirits of the Marines were not affected.

New Gardez Airport runway opens

By **Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke**
Editor

GARDEZ, Afghanistan- United Nations representatives, Government of Afghan-

istan officials and Coalition Forces commanders gathered at a newly reconstructed airstrip on the outskirts of Gardez Nov. 23, to commemorate the ribbon cutting of the Gardez Airport.

The airport is the first air access to the region since Soviet forces left the embattled airstrip strewn with broken armor and artillery equipment.

The project was jointly funded by the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development through the local Coalition Provincial Reconstruction Team.

It had a price tag of over half a million dollars in contracts awarded to Korla Afghanistan Construction and Road Making Company.

The airport will help maintain access to the region during the approaching winter as roads become impassable, according to a press release by the United Nations Office for Project Services.

United Nations Office for Projects Services hopes the Gardez Airport will act as an economic stimulus to the region.

Lt. Col. Robert R. Broadhead, military representative for USAID, spoke of the progress being made throughout the area and the airport's example of the many successful projects in Gardez.

"Now is the time for Paktya citizens to help themselves," said Broadhead. "This is evident in the many buildings we see under construction everywhere."

"The airport is just one more tool for you to help yourselves," added Broadhead.

At the conclusion of the ceremony an Air Force C-130 landed on the strip carrying pallets of humanitarian assistance supplies set for distribution throughout the region.



Contributed Photo

A United States Air Force C-130 loaded with pallets of humanitarian assistance supplies sits on the Gardez Airport runway during the ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly completed air strip. The airport will help maintain access to the region during the approaching winter as roads become impassable. The runway is viewed as yet another tool for the country of Afghanistan in its struggle to rebuild.

The long and winding road...

Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry Regiment, and members of the Sharana Provincial Reconstruction Team drive past a local national down a dusty road near Spyna, Afghanistan in Paktika Province Sept. 29.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

NCO recognized for fixing UAV feed

By **Capt. Davis McElwain**
44th Signal Battalion
and **Spc. Laura E. Griffin**
Assistant Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Sgt. Tiffany A. Lilliman, a multi-channel transmission systems operator and maintainer with Hub Platoon, Company A, 44th Signal Battalion, has helped save many lives in combat without ever having a bullet fired at her.

Lilliman is responsible for maintaining and operating the Global Broadcast System at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. GBS is an intelligence gathering tool, which provides Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle and satellite imagery feeds, among other things, to the command here.

Much like in the movie, "Black Hawk Down," these feeds are used during combat operations to help win battles and gather intelligence.

From the time Lilliman assumed responsibility of the GBS in February, she noticed that the system had trouble locking onto the satellite during bad weather and was generally unreliable other times.

"I started talking to other GBS operators in the area and found four who were experiencing similar problems," said

Lilliman. "I plotted their locations on a map and found that we were all in a line along the eastern boarder of Afghanistan, one of the most active areas of operations we have."

What Lilliman had discovered was that these operators and their GBSs were sitting on the outer edge of their satellite's transponder beam. Because of the instability of the beam on its outer edge, this was really bad news for troops in contact in these areas who rely on intelligence from the Predator UAV.

"To stay in orbit, the satellite flies in a figure eight pattern," said Lilliman. "It is because of this pattern that we were falling off the edge of the beam."

Concerned that the degraded system performance could cost Soldiers their lives, and with the Afghanistan National Elections this past September approaching quickly, she



Contributed Photo

Capt. Davis McElwain presents a Star Note and a coin from Maj. Gen. John G. Castellaw to Sgt. Tiffany Lilliman Oct. 14 for the work she did stabilizing the Global Broadcast System feed in RC East.

embarked on an ambitious plan to bring attention to the problem by documenting signal quality across Regional Command East and informing Combined Joint Task Force-76 of her findings.

"The issue was taken all the way up through the Norfolk GBS helpdesk, Army Strategic Command and Central Command," said Lilliman. "Once I convinced them that the problem was with the satellite beam and not my equip-

ment, I then had to convince them that this was a high priority problem that needed fixing right away."

To get her point across, Lilliman sent out two articles to everyone she had been in contact with about this issue.

The first was about a fire-fight in eastern Afghanistan where the Predator feed was lost, significantly degrading the mission. The second story was

See "Feed" page 9

Santos

from page 4

talented father is yet to be seen.

For lack of qualified personnel, the multi-skilled Santos was called upon to operate a base contractor's crane. Santos loaded vehicles into containers for a soon to depart unit. The unit was grateful that Santos was available to keep them on schedule.

Another mission involved delivering a bulldozer to free a disabled buffalo about 18 kilometers out of camp. The buffalo turned out to be a mine clearing vehicle.

"Sgt. Santos drove the M916 truck hauling a bulldozer on a lowboy trailer," said Staff Sgt. Vincent Duenas, heavy equipment section sergeant, talking about 50 feet of truck and trailer. "We went down a narrow road with drainage ditches on both sides to get to the bottom of a wadi. The

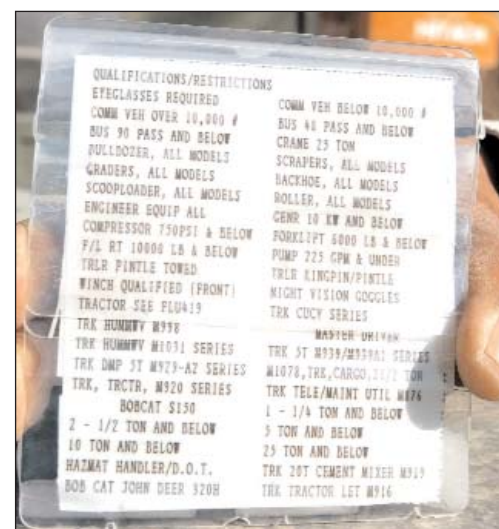
vehicle was stuck deep in sand. It took skill to drive and back that truck so the 'dozer could be delivered to the site."

"Going to and coming back from the site, we went through towns with narrow roads," Duenas continued. "Santos maneuvered through the towns, with the venders and people walking all-over the place. We didn't hit a thing. That took real skill."

"I've been in the unit since 1992," said Duenas, "Santos gets the mission done, no matter what. When the 1st Sgt is out of the wire, I fill in for him, and Sgt. Santos takes the section. It all goes smoothly."

After his deployment, there's no question what Santos will be doing; he just signed-up for 6 more years.

With 24 years in the Army, there's no bonus like some of the younger troops are getting, so it must be love.



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

A close-up of Sgt. Jeffrey Santos' licence shows some of his qualifications.

Wadi wall built to protect madrassa

By **Spc. Laura E. Griffin**
Assistant Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - A 50-meter-long stone retaining wall was dedicated in front of the Jamighi Aslamya Madrassa in Khowst, Afghanistan, Nov. 10.

"The wall was built to prevent the land in front of the madrassa from being washed away during the spring floods," said Master Sgt. Robert Payton, a Task Force White Devils Civil Affairs Team-A team sergeant. "The raging floods push huge boulders down the wadi, which is very dangerous for the children attending the madrassa."

A madrassa is a religious school where children spend years studying the Quran, as

well as their regular studies.

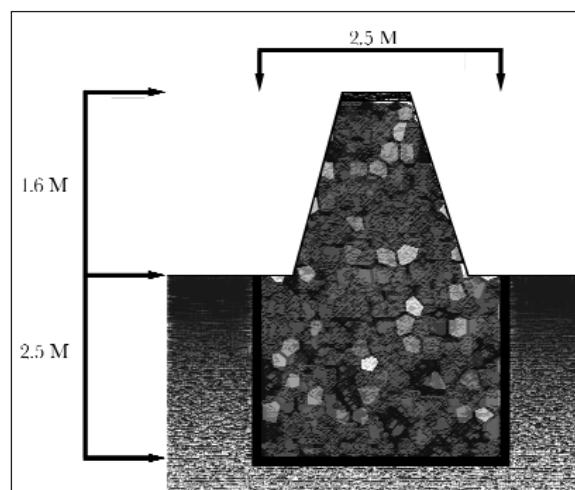
To deflect these boulders and prevent erosion from the bank in front of the madrassa, the wall's foundation was buried 2.5 meters in the ground. The above-ground part of the wall is angled inward, so that the base is thicker than the top, to also help deflect the boulders and water.

Building the wall was coordinated with the Minister of Irrigation, who is in charge of irrigation, ditches and dams, the Director of Haj, who is in charge of madrassas, and the local madrassa.

"This is a small, but positive sign of progress in Afghanistan," said Maj. Robert O'Brien, the executive officer for 2nd Battalion, 504th Para-

chute Infantry Regiment. "We are all working toward making Afghanistan a peaceful place."

Local workers from five surrounding villages built the wall in two months with funding from the TF White Devils CAT - A.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

A cross section of the wadi wall built to protect the Jamighi Aslamya Madrassa from flooding.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

This concrete and stone wall, built by local workers and funded by TF White Devils CAT-A, protects the Jamighi Aslamya Madrassa in Khowst from the spring floods that erode the land in front of the madrassa.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Students sit on the steps inside the Jamighi Aslamya Madrassa courtyard. The madrassa is threatened each year from flash floods that move large boulders down the wadi in front of the school.

Spuds bought in Ghazni Potato Project

By **Navy Lt. Ken Moates and Pfc. Kevin Otterstad**

Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team

GHAZNI, Afghanistan - The Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team met Nov. 19 with the Minister of Agriculture of Ghazni, Sultan Hussein, to deliver 400,000 Afghanis.

The money was payment to the representatives of three Ghazni farmers' co-ops participating in the Great Ghazni potato project.

The three farmers' co-ops represent twenty one local Ghazni province farmers.

The farmers, who this year had an overabundance of potatoes for their local markets, were paid fair market price for 40,000 kilograms of potatoes, which locally had a very low market price.

The potatoes were purchased at a better market value than was available to the co-ops locally by the Coalition Humanitarian assistance department.

The potatoes were purchased expressly to distribute as much needed humani-

tarian assistance food in Asadabad, Jalalabad and Parwan.

The project was coordinated through the Ghazni Ministry of Agriculture.

Hussein personally distributed the profits from the sale to the representatives from each of the three farmer's co-ops.

The program seeks to reward local farmers that work to develop viable agricultural commodities vice producing illegal cash crops such as poppy, which is used to make heroin.

44th Signal Det. lays down the line

By **Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige**
Task Force Devil Public Affairs Office

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Can you hear a pin drop

over the phone lines? No, not quite, but soon you may be able to. The 44th Signal Detachment is digging deep into the earth to improve the lines of communication on Forward Operating Base Salerno by protecting cable conduits.

The construction of a new cable network is nearing completion. Part of that network is communication vaults which are similar to a computer hub only a lot bigger. The vault is large enough for a soldier to climb down into.

"We're building this network from scratch," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Lewis, Hub Platoon platoon sergeant

The first step is getting the wires underground and protected by making the vault forms, then pouring cement. After the vaults cure and entrenched, polyvinyl chloride pipes are laid out and joined to form conduits for the communication lines. The final step is to pull the cables through the pipeline.

"The vaults will make it easier to put in new cables and repair connections if needed," said Lewis, "And the lines are also protected."

As with most of the base construction projects, local Afghans are helping with the project. The work not only provides wages to the workers but also is teaching them new skills that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

"We've been using the



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Sgt. Jonathan Lemenager, a network switch specialist, looks out of a communications vault, before pulling cable through the pipes leading to the vault.

same laborers," said Lewis who is stationed in Mannheim, Germany when not deployed. "They're hard workers. When we were working late, they volunteered to stay and work, but we had to send them home."

The conduits are being installed due to an increasing demand for more consistent network usage.

"The system of underground conduits will house both conventional and digital fiber optics lines," said 1st Lt. Drew Abell, Hub Platoon leader and project officer in charge. "This will definitely improve connectivity for on base units."

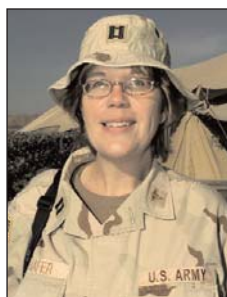
"We're laying down more reliable communications than the field network we have," Abell continued. "It's capable of carrying internet, phones and additional communication lines. We hope to have it completely finished before we leave, so we can make a smooth turnover to the next unit."



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Under the supervision of 44th Sig. Det. Soldiers, Afghan workers join polyvinyl chloride conduits to a cement communications vault. The cement vault forms a hub for communication lines. Improved reliability and easier repairs will result from this project.

Devil Voices: Who would you like to say 'Happy Holidays' to?



Capt. Sharla Shafer

"Merry Christmas to my husband Mike and my children Amy, 19, Jeremy, 12, and Mikey, 8. I love you."



Staff Sgt. James Copas

"Happy Holidays to my wife and kids in Germany and the rest of my family in Sioux City, S.D."



Spc. Marcus Baker

"Merry Christmas to my mom and sister in Miss. and my dad in Texas and my lovely wife and kids in Germany."



Chief Warrant Officer Stephen Frazee

"Merry Christmas to my wife Nikki in Fort Rucker, Ala."

Feed from page 6

about how good feed from a Predator helped to stop anti-coalition militants from firing rockets at a base, possibly saving lives.

As a result of her relentless pursuit to fix the situation, the CentCom theater information management cell and the Norfolk GBS helpdesk moved the GBS users to a stronger spot beam on the same satellite.

When GBS operators in RC East tuned their suites to the new spot beam, they experienced a dramatic increase in signal strength and quality of service.

"We had a 166% increase in reliability in our feed," said Lilliman.

This didn't just happen over night, though. For the

first six months Lilliman was here, she worked long, exhausting hours late into the night.

"When I first arrived at FOB Salerno, the system was not working at all," Lilliman recalled. "I got the system up and running in two days, but we still had that beam problem

say to one of my coworkers, 'Hey, can you pick me up a plate at the chow hall,' because I was too busy trying to fix the feed to get chow myself."

As a result of her efforts, commanders have a powerful and now more reliable tool at their disposal that can be used to defeat the enemy, provide for a more stable Afghanistan, and save American Soldier lives.

Lilliman was recognized Oct. 14 by Lt. Col. Keith Nicoletti, the 44th Signal Battalion Commander, and Lt. Col. Richard Price, the CJTF-76 Information Management Officer.

She was presented a Star Note and coin from Maj. Gen. John G. Castellaw, the

CentCom Chief of Staff, for increasing "the situational awareness across our warfighting force thereby increasing our warfighting and force protection capabilities."

Additionally, Castellaw addressed Lilliman, stating "Noncommissioned officers such as yourself represent the very fabric of what makes our Armed Forces so successful in our Global War on Terror and as such I applaud you for your tremendous accomplishment."

Despite all the praise, Lilliman insists that what really matters is that our troops are safer because they have accurate and timely feeds from the Predators.

"I'm here to do my job," she said, "and making the equipment work is just part of it. Saving soldiers lives is what matters. All the rest is just bonus."

"I'm here to do my job and making the equipment work is just part of it. Saving soldiers' lives is what matters. All the rest is just bonus."

- Sgt. Tiffany A. Lilliman,
multi-channel transmissions system operator and maintainer, Hub Platoon, Co. A, 44th Signal Battalion

to work through. There were many times when I would just

ANA from page 1

of roles for the troops, said 1st Lt. Joseph W. Galvin, a Redwood City, Calif. native, executive officer and acting commander of Co. A.

Normally, Coalition forces will lead an operation with the ANA in a support role, explained Galvin.

The day began with Galvin demonstrating to the ANA company commander how to plan the operation with the use of a terrain model.

"The planning helped a lot, normally you will see the ANA just charge an objective as quickly as possible," said Galvin. "This time they were able to plan their moving pieces and organize a strategy."

The objective was a series of caves that were suspected to be frequented by terrorists looking for a place to stay after crossing the boarder from Pakistan into Afghanistan.

As ANA and Coalition forces moved on to the objective the paratroopers set up an outer cordon and let the ANA go to work.

"They pretty much did all the hard work in the operation," said Spc. Matthew R. Wills, a Portland, Mich. native, and grenadier with Co. A.

"The only thing we really did besides set up the perimeter was have our engineers blow the caves," he added.

Once the caves were found to be free of any enemy forces, engineers with Co. A set charges to destroy them and prevent further use of them by the terrorists.

Since arriving in Afghanistan in April, paratroopers have been working with Afghan Soldiers on an increasingly frequent basis; a recent development in the working relationship with the ANA was the Coalition forces playing a supporting role.

"It was a good mission for (the ANA) to get out on," said Galvin. "It gave their company commander a lot of confidence."

"The commander gained experience from the mission planning which ultimately led to the success of the mission and that is something they will use in the future," said Galvin.

With the future of Afghanistan's security in the hands of Afghan forces such as the ANA and Afghan National Police, the confidence and capability of Afghan security forces is a key mission for Coalition forces.

"They were able to get their feet wet, now they know they can do it themselves," said Wills.

Marines from page 1

If they stay in place, they will be destroyed by artillery, machine guns, and eventually Marine infantry. If they retreat, they will be destroyed by bombs, and gun runs from the aircraft.

During the operation, the enemy fired from across a valley, preventing Marines from assaulting through and engaging at close range.

"When they first attacked, I couldn't believe it," said Lance Cpl. Marc I. Rahman, a motor vehicle operator with Co. F. "I didn't think I would see any combat since I wasn't a grunt, but since the Marines train 'Every Marine to be a rifleman,' I just did what I had to do."

"When we engaged the enemy after they fired at us, it looked like the fourth of July," said Lance Cpl. Karsten A. Machado, an infantryman with Co. F. "They hit us with rocket propelled grenades and machinegun fire. We hit them with everything from machineguns to missiles to artillery to bombs."

Marines train extensively in employing combined arms and are considered to be very adept at integrating the available weap-ons systems. Due to the overwhelming re-sponse of fires, the enemy was unable to continue engaging the patrol, and no Marines or Sailors were injured in either attack.

We want to hear from you

Are you an aspiring writer or photographer? We want to use your stories and photos in the Desert Devil Dispatch to highlight the great things the men and women of Regional Command-East are doing. For more information, e-mail Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter at carterg@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

Up Front & Centered: Make time your friend again

By Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
Combined Task Force Devil PAO

How can I get ahead when I am so far behind? One of the biggest problems we face in life is that of time management.

Everyone I know who works and is doing a good job spends at least 50 or 60 hours a week on the job or thinking about work. If you know of a job where you can get everything done in a regular 8-hour day or 40-hour week, let me know and I will send them my resume.

We are in an age of computers, palm pilots and cell phones, but contrary to public opinion, these devices do not make our workload any easier to complete. They just allow us to get more work to us faster.

From a corporate or organizational way of thinking that is not a bad thing,

but from a personal view, it means more stress and the need for fewer people to get the job done.

So what do you do about it? Start giving up. No, that doesn't mean quitting your job. Start giving up the notion that you need to do everything yourself because your subordinates can't do it as well as you.

Some months ago I spoke of the monkey on your back. That is when a colleague or subordinate passes along one of their responsibilities, or "monkeys," over to you.

Don't fall for it. What you should do is crossstrain your subordinates so they can do your job when you're not there. Bad management sees training a younger and less expensive employee as a way to replace older more experienced employees as good business. But good management

will see your training as a mentor increasing the value of the company.

Insecure leaders do not train subordinates because they fear the actions of bad management and of losing their job. That is always something you need to consider, but you shouldn't allow bad management to make you a bad supervisor. Be true to yourself and your self will be true to you.

The leader or supervisor with good skills who passes them along will have a section that produces good results which makes the whole team look good. That supervisor will also be less likely to develop an ulcer from overwork.

Another way to manage your time more efficiently is to make a list of things to do in order of their importance and start working those things in order. As you finish one and move on to another you will get a feeling of accomplishment which in turn keeps your stress level down.

Give it up! Share your workload and pass along your knowledge. Your mind and body will appreciate it and so will your senior leaders.

"Be true to yourself and your self will be true to you."

-Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
Combined Task Force Devil
PAO

Kiwis help clean up diesel spill near Bamyan

By Staff Sgt. Tim Rowe
New Zealand PRT Public
Relations Officer

BAMYAN, Afghanistan - The New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team helped to contain an environmental disaster that occurred when a fully loaded diesel tanker truck overturned and crashed into the main river of Bamyan Province Nov. 21.

The civilian tanker went off the road about 16 kilometers east of Bamyan City and slowly began discharging an estimated 15,000 liters of diesel directly into the river.

No one was hurt in the accident, but the potential for an environmental disaster threatened the river as the main diesel tank was ruptured.

The NZPRT dispatched its Quick Reaction Force to the scene of the accident, but they were unable to right the tanker or significantly reduce the flow of diesel escaping into the river.

By chance, there was a group of American Department

of Defence employees in the local area, with some expertise in managing environmental disasters, who were able to advise on how to minimize the damage.

Heidi Crowe, Laurie Wright, Adam Fitzhugh and Jerry Booker were conducting a veterinary study in the region and came to the aid of the NZPRT.

A second team of New Zealand soldiers was dispatched to the site and together with the Americans they were able to reduce the potential damage by applying detergent to a large pool of diesel that had still not found its way into the river.

Detergent binds the diesel to the water molecules, thereby mitigating most of the environmental damage.

The NZPRT also dispatched a patrol to inform the villages downstream of the effects of the accident and the measures they needed to take to make the water drinkable.

This particular spill had the potential to be disastrous as the Bamyan River is the pri-

mary source of water for the entire Bamyan Valley's population.

It should not, however, have a significant environmental impact as the quantity of diesel that ultimately escaped was not significant.

It was also fortunate that the accident occurred some distance away from any villages along the river. A recent

snowfall also ensured that the river's flow was higher than usual, resulting in the diesel being carried away and evaporating much more quickly.

Environmental accidents like this are something the local Afghan authorities are not normally equipped to deal with because they currently lack the necessary resources and expertise.



Staff Sgt. Tim Rowe

American Department of Defense personnel and soldiers from the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team examine the scene of the crashed tanker in the bed of the Bamyan River.